

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----071844 091750Z /46

O R 091642Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7745
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAGUA 4245

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, OAS, VE, CS, PN, NU
SUBJECT: CONVERSATION WITH SOMOZA: 8 SEPTEMBER

REF: STATE 214892

SUMMARY: AT SOMOZA'S REQUEST, AMB MET WITH HIM SEPT 8.
TOPIC OF DISCUSSION WAS THE OAS COUNCIL MEETING. SOMOZA
CONTINUED TO HOLD OTHER COUNTRIES RESPONSIBLE FOR NICARAGUA'S
TURMIOL AND INDICATED CONTINUED UNWILLINGNESS TO COMPROMISE.
ACTION REQUESTED: SOMOZA REQUESTED ACCESS TO CARLOS ANDRES
PEREZ' COMMENTARY ON THEIR MEETING AS REPORTED TO PRESIDENT
CARTER BY PEREZ. EMB REQUEST GUIDANCE. END SUMMARY.

1. AT SOMOZA'S REQUEST, AMB MET WITH HIM FOR 45 MINUTES
ON 8 SEPT. VICE FONMIN BODAN WAS PRESENT "BECAUSE OF HIS
ROLE AS EMISARY ARRANGING PEREZ-SOMOZA MEETING." SOMOZA
TOLD AMB THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE COMMENTARIES MADE BY
VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT REGARDING THEIR MEETING BECAUSE HE WAS
UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT PEREZ HAD "LIED AND MISCONSTRUED"
THEIR CONVERSATION. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE HAD ATTENDED
THE MEETING WITH MIAMI VICE MAYOR, MANOLO REBOZO, WHO
COULD CONFIRM WHAT HAD TRANSPIRED. PEREZ, SAID SOMOZA,

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WISHED TO PRESENT HIM AS PIGHEADED (TESTADURO) AND
INFLEXIBLE, HOWEVER, HE HAD GONE TO SEE HIM TO EXPLAIN
THAT THE NICARAGUAN CONSTITUTION COULD NOT BE BROKEN
WITH HIS EARLY DEPARTURE BECAUSE CHAOS COULD RESULT.
HE HAD ASKED PEREZ TO ENCOURAGE THE OPPOSITION TO TALK
TO HIM SO SOME AGREEMENT COULD MATERIALIZE THAT WOULD
PROTECT SOMOZA'S LIFE AND PROPERTY AND HIS FOLLOWERS'.

SOMOZA ALSO SAID PEREZ HAD TOLD HIM HE UNDERSTOOD SOMOZA'S DESIRE TO MAINTAIN CONSTITUTIONAL CONTINUITY AND WOULD TRY TO HELP HIM WITH THE OPPOSITION. HOWEVER, FOR POLITICAL REASONS, PEREZ WAS CREATING "THIS CHAOTIC CONDITION" IN THE OAS.

2. SOMOZA CONINUED THAT HE WANTED AMB TO TELL WASHINGTON THAT THE SITUATION WAS UNDER CONTROL AND GOING TO CALM DOWN. EXCEPT FOR THE SANDINISTAS, THERE WILL BE A TRUCE AND NO COMMUNIST TAKEOVER, SO THERE WAS NO NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL INTERVENTION. ONLY IF THE EQUILIBRIUM SHOULD BE BROKEN BY ATTEMPTING TO OUST HIM BEFORE 1981 WOULD CHAOS RESULT.

3. SOMOZA SAID THE NICARAGUAN AMB IN COSTA RICA HAD BEEN IN CONTACT WITH CARAZO TO SAY THAT VENEZUELA WAS NOT ACTING IN GOOD FAITH AND TO ASK COSTA RICA NOT TO VOTE AGAINST NICARAGUA IN THE OAS. HE HAD RECEIVED WORD THAT COSTA RICA WOULD NOT SUPPORT A MEETING OF THE OAS COUNCIL TO DECIDE ON ACTION BUT RATHER PREFERRED TO POSTPONE IT. THIS WAS A CRUEL POSITION BECAUSE IT KEPT NICARAGUA IN A "3 AND-2" POSITION (REFERRING TO BASEBALL TERMINOLGY), WITH A SWORD OF DAMOCLES SUSPENDED OVER ITS HEAD. THIS WAS HUMILIATING FOR NICARAGUA AND A SOURCE OF DESTABLIZATION. SOMOZA SAID THE USG DID NOT HAVE THE NEEDED 15 VOTES IN THE OAS (NOTE: ONLY 13
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VOTES ARE NEEDED TO CONVENE MFM. END NOTE), THEREFORE, NICARAGUA WOULD SUCCEED. "WHAT LAW HAS SOMOZA BROKEN? OBVIOUSLY, THE OAS CANNOT COME HERE FORCEFULLY (A LA BRAVA). WORSE THINGS HAVE OCCURRED IN OTHER PARTS OF LATIN AMERICAN AND NOTHING HAS HAPPENED IN OAS." SOMOZA WENT ON TO SAY HE HAD NOT VIOLATED INTERNATIONAL LAW; HE COULD BE THE WORST DICTATOR, BUT HE HAD NOT VIOLATED INTERNATIONAL LAW. ALL HE HAD DONE WAS TO "BENIGNLY" DEFEND HIMSELF. THE USG WAS LENGTHENING THE PROCESS OF STRIFE IN NICARAGUA, BUT WOULD NOT OBTAIN A SUCCESSFUL VOTE. SOMOZA SAID HE HAD BEEN INFORMED THAT MEXICO WOULD VOTE FOR MFM, BUT AGAINST SANCTIONS. REITERATING THAT THIS WAS "SIMPLE REVENGE AND POLITICS" ON THE PART OF VENEZUELA, SOMOZA ADDED THAT A VOTE IN FAVOR OF THE MFM BY COSTA RICA WOULD BE UNFRIENDLY TO NICARAGUA (COMMENT: HINTING AT POSSIBLE RETALIATION. END COMMENT). SOMOZA WANTED AMB TO INFORM WASHINGTON THAT HE WAS NOT INTIMIDATED BY THE VENEZUELAN OIL BOYCOTT AND THE FACT THAT VENEZUELAN UNIONS WERE GIVING MONEY TO NICARAGUAN STRIKERS.

4. SOMOZA WENT ON TO SAY THAT NO OAS DECISION AGAINST NICARAGUA WAS POSSIBLE BECAUSE CHILE, ARGENTINA, BRAZIL,

URUGUAY, PARAGUAY, BOLIVIA, GUATEMALA, HONDURAS, EL SALVADOR, PERU AND, OF COURSE, NICARAGUA WOULD VOTE AGAINST IT. TELLING THE AMB THAT HE WAS SPEAKING OF THENRECORD, SOMOZA LAUNCHED INTO A TIRADE AGAINST THE USG, HOLDING THE USG RESPONSIBLE FOR BLOODSHED HEREWM HE SAID THERE WAS MOHE VIOLENCE NOW IN COLOMBIA AND OTHER PARTS OF LATIN AMERICA THAN IN NICARAGUA. A DECISION AGAINST NICARAGUA WOULD BREAK UP THE OAS AND TO POSTPONE IT WOULD BE TO CONTINUE BENEATH A SWORD OF DAMOCLES, A SITUATION THAT WOULD ENCOURAGE VIOLENCE IN NICARAGUA.

5. AMB RESPONDED, "AS YOU KNOW, I HAVE NO REPORT ON THE MESSAGE PRESIDENT PEREZ SENT TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON SECRET

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YOUR VISIT. I ONLYLEARNED OF THE VISIT FROM YOU AND WAS TOLD BY WASHINGTON THAT EMB NOT INFORMED DUE TO PEREZ' DESIRE TO KEEP THE MEETING STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL. I WILL COMMUNICATE TO WASHINGTON YOUR DEISRE TO KNOW WHAT PEREZ SAID." (ACTION REQUESTED: EMB REQUESTS GUIDANCE ON RESPONSE TO SOMOZA. END ACTION REQUESTED).

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ACTION SS-25

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-----071764 091751Z /40

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7746
INFO AMEMBASSY CARACAS
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EXDIS

THE AMB SAID HE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHY THE GON DIDN'T WANT THE ISSUES OF THE COUNTRY DISCUSSED IN AN INTERNATIONAL

FORUM. SOMOZA HAD JUST TOLD AMB THAT GOV RESPONSIBLE FOR DESTABILIZING NICARAGUA. PREVIOUSLY, HE HAD BLAMED THE GOCR AND GOP FOR THE SAME THING. AMB THOUGHT IT NATURAL FOR USG TO BE CONCERNED AND WISH TO OPENLY DISCUSS NICARAGUAN PROBLEMS IN INTERNATIONAL FORA. EMB REALIZED A STALEMATE EXISTED HERE. SECTORS OF THE OPPOSITION WISHED TO OVERTHROW THE GON, BUT LACKED SUFFICIENT STRENGTH. ON THE OTHER HAND, IN THE ABSENCE OF A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT, THE GON MIGHT THINK IT NECESSARY TO EMPLOY EXTREME REPRESSIVE MEASURES TO PACIFY THE COUNTRY. CLEARLY, THE USG WAS IN FAVOR OF A PEACEFUL DEMOCRATIC SOLUTION--WHICH WAS ONLY POSSIBLE THROUGH MEDIATION OR THE GOOD OFFICES OF A THIRD PARTY, AS NICARAGUANS HAD PROVED UNABLE TO INITIATE THE PROCESS.

6. SOMOZA RESPONDED THAT HE PREFERRED THE TERM "GOOD OFFICES" TO MEDIATION. HE ASKED IF THE USG WANTED TO OVERTHROW HIM. AMB REPLIED THAT, CLEARLY, AS APPEARED IN TODAY'S NOVEDADES, THE USG DID NOT WITH TO INTERVENE AND, THEREFORE, SUPPORTED INITIATIVES OF OTHER COUNTRIES. SOMOZA SAID THAT HE WAS WILLING TO TALK, BUT WAS NOT SECRET

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WILLING TO LEAVE BEFORE 1981. FINALLY, AMB TOLD SOMOZA THAT THE USG FELT NO RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY PERSONS KILLED HERE OR ANY DEATHS IN FUTURE. WE HAVE A PERFECT RIGHT TO ASSIST COUNTRIES IN ACCORDANCE WITHOUR OWN INTERESTS AND PREFERENCES; AMB NOTED THAT HE MADE THIS STATEMENT ESPECIALLY BECAUSE BODAN WAS PRESENT FOR SOMOZA'S TIRADE. SOMOZA BECAME APOLOGETIC AND ADMITTED THE USG HAD THE RIGHT TO TAILOR ITS ASSISTANCE TO COUNTRIES IN THE LIGHT OF OUR OWN BEST INTERESTS.

7. COMMENT: SOMOZA APPEARS FEARFUL THAT, THROUGH SOME MEDIATION PROCESS, HE MAY BE FORCED TO MAKE CONCESSIONS-- CONCESSIONS WHICH HE IS UNWILLING TO AMKE AND FEELS HE DOES NOT HAVE TO MAKE IN THE FACE OF WHAT HE CONSIDERS TO BE A WEAK, DIVIDED OPPOSITION. HIS CONTINUANCE UNTIL 1981 REAMINS A NON-NIGOTIABLE FACTOR. SOLAUN

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